

Soldiers *Online*

1812: Overture to a

THE War of 1812 marked the first changing of the guard in American leadership as members of the Revolutionary War generation passed the torch to the next generation.

While Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison and Winfield Scott should be familiar names to soldiers, Jacob Jennings Brown and Alexander Macomb also played roles in transforming the pre-Civil War Army.

Many other soldiers, both privates and officers, served as secretaries of war or in Congress, and enacted policies and laws on needed reforms in such areas as equipment acquisition, soldier pay, and pensions for widows and orphans.

Some served until the Civil War and groomed the leaders of that war during the Mexican-American War of the 1840s.

Andrew Jackson

Jackson, commander of the Tennessee militia, wrote the secretary of war that he would “rejoice at the opportunity of placing the American eagle on the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola, and Fort St. Augustine,” according to “The War of 1812,” published in 1989 by the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

After much debate, Congress approved only an expedition into that part of the Gulf Coast in dispute between the United States and Spain, and refused to entrust the venture to the Tennesseans.

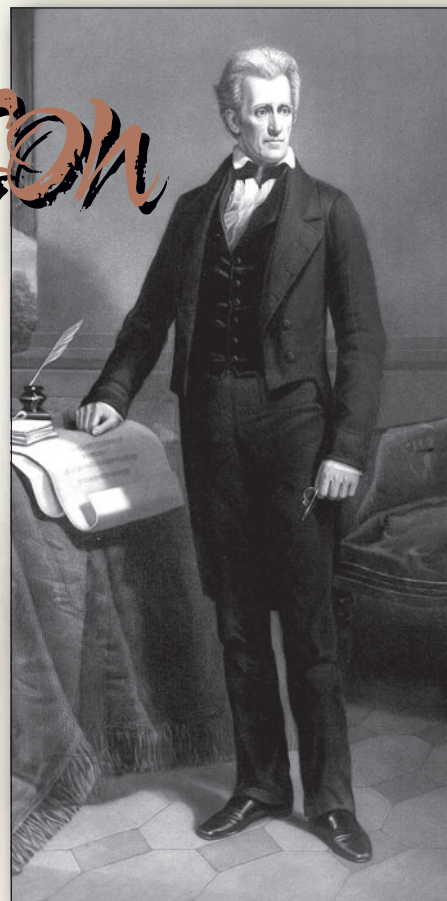
An Indian uprising in that part of the Mississippi Territory soon to become Alabama saved Jackson’s military career. Inspired by Tecumseh’s earlier successes in the Ohio Valley, the Creek Indians went to war in the summer of 1813, a campaign that culminated in the massacre of more than 500 non-Indian men, women and children at Fort Mims.

Jackson reassembled his army, which had been dismissed after Congress rejected its services for the attack on Florida, and moved into the Mississippi Territory. His own energy

added to his problems, for he soon outran his primitive supply system. The hardships of the campaign and one near defeat at the hands of the Indians destroyed any enthusiasm the militia might have had for continuing in service.

Jackson was compelled to entrench for several months at Fort Strother on the Coosa River until the arrival of a regiment of the Regular Army gave him the means to deal with the mutinous militia. At the end of March 1814 he decided that he had sufficient strength for a decisive blow against the Indians, and overran their fortified camp at the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River.

Jackson was commissioned a brigadier general in April 1814. Promoted in May to major general, he moved his army south toward Pensacola in present-day Florida, captured it in November and hurried on to New Orleans. There, aided by naval forces, he repulsed an attempted British invasion on Jan. 8, 1815. The British suffered more than 2,000 casualties, while the Americans lost 71. Unbeknownst to the combatants,



the Treaty of Ghent had ended the war just 15 days earlier, on Dec. 24.

Before becoming president in 1828, Jackson led an attack on Spanish-held Florida and became its territorial governor after it was ceded to the United States. □

New Army

Story by SFC Lisa Beth Snyder

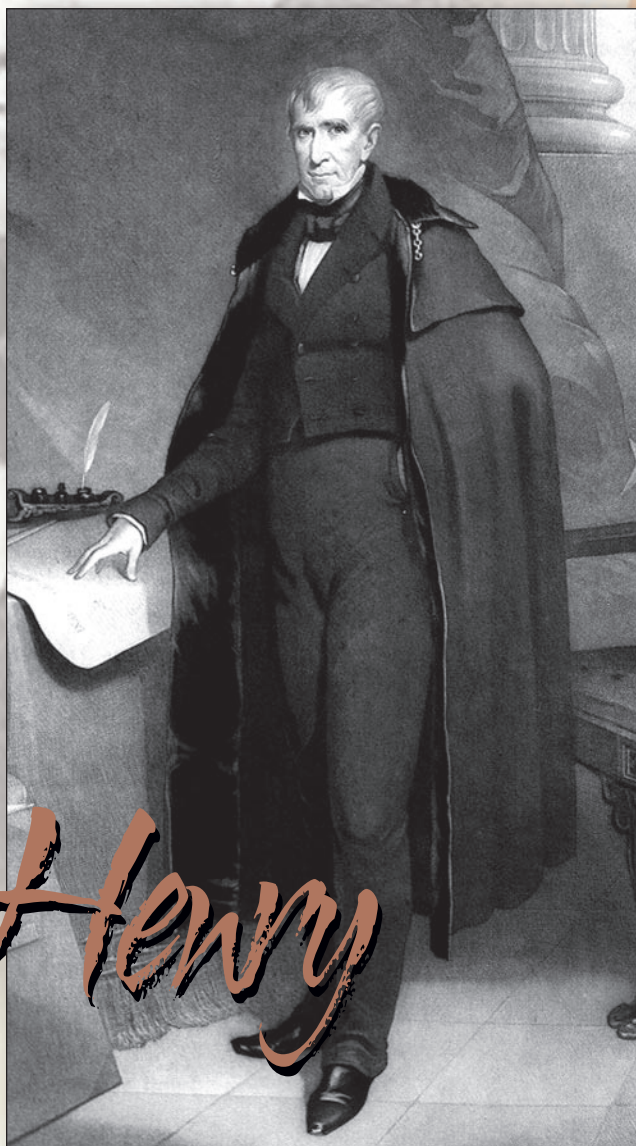
Before the War of 1812 Harrison was well known for his actions at the Battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana Territory. He also served as the governor of that territory for 12 years before the war.

During the War of 1812 Harrison recaptured Fort Detroit from the British before his Kentucky riflemen joined Navy Cmdr. Oliver Hazard Perry to rout the British forces at the Battle of the Thames River in Ontario in October 1813.

Instead of attacking with infantry in the traditional line-against-line fashion, Harrison ordered a mounted attack. The maneuver so overwhelmed the British that they surrendered in droves. The Indian allies of the British also were routed and Tecumseh, who had brought so much trouble to the United States on the western frontier, was killed.

After the war, Harrison served in Ohio and national legislatures and was the minister to Columbia.

The 67-year-old newly inaugurated president died of pneumonia after one month in office in April 1841. □



William Henry Harrison

American Leadership

Commanding Generals of the Army

After the War of 1812, only one major general was provided for the Army. Because Jackson had resigned from the Army to become governor of Florida, the commission remained with MG Jacob Jennings Brown.

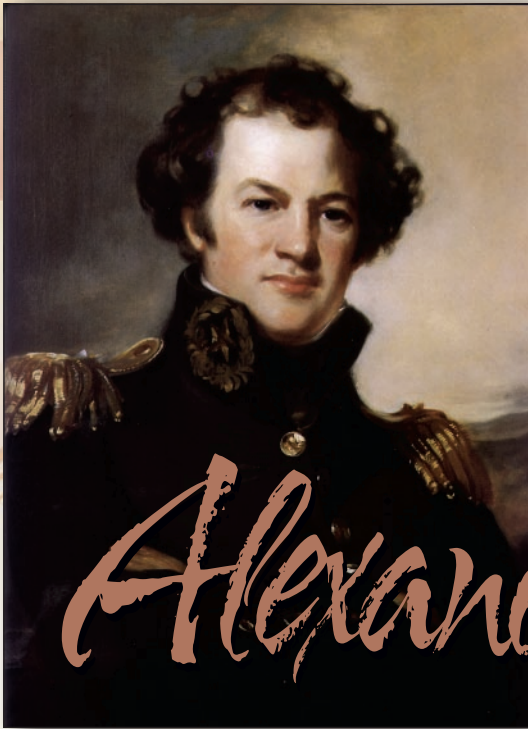
To provide a senior line officer in the chain of command, the lack of which had been a serious deficiency in the War of 1812, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun brought Brown to Washington in a position that later became known as commanding general of the Army, which Brown held until his death in 1828. He was succeeded by MG Alexander Macomb and, when Macomb died in 1841, MG Winfield Scott was appointed. Made brevet lieutenant general in 1847 (the first three-star general since George Washington), Scott served until his retirement in 1861. □

Jacob Jennings Brown



Brown began the War of 1812 as a New York militia officer and was appointed as a regular Army brigadier general after his successful actions against the British at Sackett's Harbor in 1813. In early 1814, he was appointed major general and put in command of the Niagara frontier. He led his forces in the victorious battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane.

As commanding general of the Army, he recommended pay increases for soldiers who re-enlisted and for noncommissioned officers. He also developed a system of periodic centralized unit training for widely scattered units. □



Macomb also served in the battle at Sackett's Harbor. In 1814 he led his troops to victory against the British at Plattsburg, N.Y., which earned him a promotion to brevet major general. After the war he returned to the rank of colonel, but was promoted to major general after becoming commanding general of the Army.

Macomb's initiatives as the Army's top general included new enlisted pay increases, supervision of Army staff offices by the commanding general, a doubling of Army strength, support for widows and orphans of officers, and an officer retirement system. □

Alexander Macomb

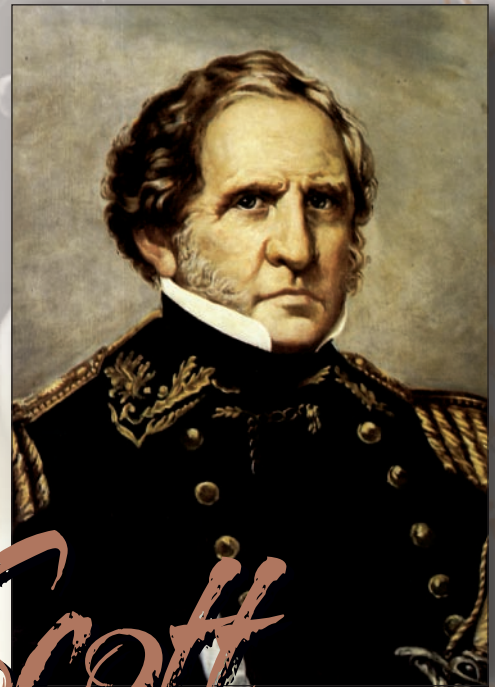
As a brigade commander serving under Jacob Jennings Brown, Scott played instrumental roles in U.S. victories at Chippewa Creek and Lundy's Lane. After the war he conducted the board that wrote the Army's first standard drill regulations, and he conducted the officer-retention board following the force reduction Congress had mandated after the Treaty of Ghent.

Scott became commanding general of the Army in 1841, and after the 1846 outbreak of the Mexican War he planned and commanded the Army's first post-Revolutionary War amphibious invasion and the subsequent capture of Veracruz.

A stickler for detail who had written many of the Army's early training manuals and publications governing Army discipline, Scott became known to his men as "Old Fuss and Feathers."

He also played a key role in training and developing many of the military and political leaders who would fight in the Civil War. And although he was a Southerner by birth, in anticipation of the war, he began urging the reinforcement of southern posts to prevent their seizure and moved his headquarters from New York City to Washington.

Having served his country for nearly half a century, he retired in 1861 and died at West Point, N.Y., on May 29, 1866. □



Winfield Scott

(Information from this article is from American Military History, Chapter 6, produced by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, and from Webster's American Military Biographies.)